

On a Man's Writing.

into conviction, a few of the writers, who have attempted the last achievement of presumptuous man. After inspecting these pages awhile, he raised his eyes, and the Great Spirit was gone. Mighty transformation of all things! The luminaries of heaven -no longer shone with his splendour; the adorned earth no longer looked fair with his beauty; the darkness of night had ceased to be rendered solemn by his majesty; life and thought were not an effect of his all-pervading energy; it was not his providence that supported an infinite charge of dependent beings; his empire of justice no longer spread over the universe; nor had even that universe sprung from his all-creating power. Yet when you saw the intellectual course brought to this signal conclusion, though aware of the force of each preceding and predisposing circumstance, you might nevertheless be somewhat struck with the suddenness of the final decision, and might be curious to know what kind of argument and eloquence could so quickly finish the work. You would examine those pages with the expectation probably of something more powerful than subtlety attenuated into inanity, and, in that invisible and impalpable state, mistaken by the writer, and willingly admitted by the perverted reader, for profundity of reasoning; than attempts to destroy the certainty, or preclude the application, of some of those great familiar principles which must be taken as the basis of human reasoning, or it can have no basis ; than suppositions which attribute the order of the universe to such causes as it would be felt ridiculous to pronounce adequate to produce the most trifling piece of mechanism ; than mystical jargon which, under the name of *nature*, alternately exalts almost into the properties of a god, and reduces far below those of a man, some imaginary and undefinable agent or agency, which performs the most amazing works without power, and displays the most amazing wisdom without intelligence; than a zealous preference of that part of every great dilemma which merely confounds and sinks the mind to that which elevates while it overwhelms it; than a constant endeavour to degrade as far as possible everything that is sublime in our speculations and feelings ; or than monstrous parallels between religion and mythology. You would be still more unprepared to expect on so solemn a subject the occasional wit,